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C O N T E N T S

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The Ideal Man of Plato

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THE IDEAL MAN OF PLATO

THE IDEAL MAN ON PLATO IN FIVE SOVEREIGN RELATIONS

I. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO HIMSELF

By

James Ewen Enman

II. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO OTHERS

Ph.B. Boston University 1897

III. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO THE STATE

IV. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO LAW

A Thesis

V. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO GOD

Submitted in the Department of Philosophy of Religion
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C O N T E N T S

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- I. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO HIMSELF
- II. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO OTHERS
- III. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO THE STATE
- IV. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO LAW
- V. THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO GOD
- CONCLUSION

F o r e w o r d

Quotations from the Republic are uniformly from Davies and Vaughn's translation. Jowett's translation of the other Dialogues has been generally used. When otherwise, the translator is noted. All books, encyclopedia articles, and translations given in the Bibliography have been carefully examined.

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THE IDEAL MAN OF PLATO IN FIVE SOVEREIGN RELATIONSHIPS

Our initial approach to the Ideal Man of Plato is through the spiritual portrait of Socrates which Plato has given the world. Plato learned to know Socrates as a man who sedulously searched his own soul, fondly exchanged thoughts with his God, and diligently devoted his life to helping others to care chiefly about wisdom and righteousness and the genuine improvement of their souls.¹ Socrates, like the constitution of the ideal state, is an inspiring intimation of the Perfect Prototype in heaven, but he is not its very self. In like manner, the best formulation of laws which man has ever made is but a dim reflection of the Perfect Laws which cannot be written or engraved on any material thing, but "are written with insight in the learner's mind,"² and are forever potent, living realities in the soul of God, and in the souls of men.

Now God is perfect, and his eternal excellence, not the approximate excellence of any man, is the measure of the man who would embrace this illimitable opportunity to become like God, as far as this is possible.³ Moreover, God is concerned

¹ Symposium, 175; Phaedo, 68.

² Phaedrus, 276. (J. Wright's translation.)

³ Timaeus, 29, 30.

in helping men to become wholly and eternally excellent.
The man who chiefly concerns himself with this concern is
the Ideal Man of Plato. Because Socrates made it his chief
concern to live a just and holy life, and succeeded so well
in doing it, Plato regarded him as the best known human
example of the Ideal Man. Plato's Ideal Man "attends to
his own business" in Five Sovereign Relationships: first,
The Ideal Man's Relation to Himself; second, The Ideal Man's
Relation to Others; third, The Ideal Man's Relation to the
State; fourth, The Ideal Man's Relation to Law; and fifth,
The Ideal Man's Relation to God. These five sovereign relation-
ships are to be synthesized, and the Ideal Man is to live in
perennial and eternal fellowship with God and godlike men,
personalities who are both akin to and in the order of God.

I

THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO HIMSELF

"All men who have any degree of right feeling, at the beginning of every enterprise, whether small or great, always call upon God. ... I call upon God, and beg him to be our savior ... and to bring us to the haven of probability."¹

Human Life Examined

Every man has to live with himself all the time, therefore he should see to it that he is always in good company.² But has Plato's Ideal Man, or any other man, a chance to be in good company when he has to live with himself all the time? A theoretical answer will not satisfy a Platonist for he is convinced that life is based on facts (reality), not on theories. Furthermore, he insists that "the unexamined life is not to be lived by a man."³ Therefore he proposes to make an examination, and to report what he finds. But some men are not of this frame of mind, and many men fail to make such an examination, or having made it, deliberately close their eyes to ascertained facts, thus "allowing ignorance to reside in their minds,"⁴ and willfully hold truth in

1 Timaeus, 27, 48.

2 Republic, 443.

3 Apology, 38.

4 Republic, 382.

unrighteousness. No one, however, can justly claim that Plato's Ideal Man either closed his eyes to ascertained facts, or held the truth back from others.

Deformed Characters Discovered

Let us look at some typical excerpts from Plato's report of his examination of the life of man. "To every man his all is dual."¹ "A terrible species of wild and lawless appetites resides in every one of us."² "Our soul is fraught with an infinite number of contradictions."³ "In man himself, that is, in his soul, there resides a good principle and a bad."⁴ "The term evil comprises everything that destroys and corrupts, and the term good, everything that preserves and benefits."⁵

Similitudes Convey Dark Facts

To make clear that bad environment and vicious habits work havoc in human lives Plato turns to similitudes. His similitudes, like his tales and myths, convey ideas. Let us recall a few of them. The cave men who resemble us;⁶ Glaucus, the sea-god, his natural condition lost and a much polluted and damaged one acquired;⁷ Euthyphron, the ridiculous defender of holiness, zestfully hastening to commit an impious act

¹ Laws, 726.

² Republic, 572.

³ Ibid., 603.

⁴ Ibid., 431.

⁵ Republic, 608.

⁶ Ibid., 515.

⁷ Ibid., 611.

against his father;¹ the unjust scoundrel with the ring of Gyges;² the winged steeds and the charioteer;³ the shifty crew of Sophists, and the Athenian people the personification of sophism;⁴ Alcibiades, talented inebriate, unbalanced by hunger for popularity, neglecting his moral nature, yet deeply shamed by the moral excellence of Socrates.⁵ What a bazaar of depressing derelicts!

Inaccurate Witnesses

When the lives of men are examined with Socratic thoroughness obtruding deficiencies and dwarfed and damaged souls such as these do appear. But the soul of the examiner, whether a self-inquisitor, or an impartial investigator of others, protests that none of these men are worthy to be classed as followers of the Ideal. Manifestly all of them were out "to express themselves," and "to live their own lives," after the fashion of modern behaviorists, for there is no evidence that any one of them had ever given Hellas a chance to be "the nurse of man complete as man." They illustrate the fact that residence in Greece is no guarantee that such delinquents will reach the Islands of the Blessed. Their innate desire was for pleasure;⁶ they contented themselves in living on con-

1 Euthyphron, 2-16.

2 Republic, 367, 612.

3 Phaedrus, 246.

4 Republic, 492.

5 Symposium, 215, 216.

6 Phaedrus, 237.

jecture, opinion and sensation without reason,¹ and took the visible objects as the sole source of knowledge. Those who do so cannot give a satisfactory account of man, much less apprehend the essential Form of the Good.² For they have denied to their souls the power to experience and to exemplify in life the essential nature of man. Consequently, they were "inaccurate witnesses"³ to that nature. Even so, they, like potsherds, afford an inkling of a former excellence. In this way they intimate something of the indestructible equipment of the human soul.

Faithful and True Witnesses

The Platonic Socrates recalled that when very young he one day caught himself hungering to be good and thirsting to know. As he realized that this thirst and hunger were different and stronger than those for physical nourishment he wondered at his discovery. He also wondered whether this Something which caused him to wonder, and prompted him to ask questions, and gave him the ability to make the discovery, was not more real than his body. To this Invisible Something that caused him to wonder he listened with his heart, and became radiant with a sense of Its friendliness. A Voice without a sound said "Know Thyself." This Voice spoke in the inner sanctuary of his soul, and also from the Supreme Empyrean. Here

¹ Timaeus, 28; Republic, 511.

² Republic, 505.

³ Phaedo, 65.

was Something that was at once friendly and akin to him, and wanted to help him to think what is true and to do what is right. He decided to make it his chief concern to become like God through sound reasoning and through moral excellence. Afterward he characterized those who "rightly examine themselves,"¹ and yearn to "participate in God,"² and are always loyal to the Oracle,³ as "Children and Disciples of God";⁴ and, for the encouragement of those who honestly try to fashion their lives by the Perfect Pattern, he affirmed, "God himself will kindly give thee aid."⁵

"Children and Disciples of God"

If we are children and disciples of God, then life is to be regarded as a home and a school in which the moral character of each member is to be made as pleasing as may be in the eye of heaven,⁶ and the rational principle of the soul of each one is to be guided so that it naturally fixes its attention on the things that really exist.⁷ When this is done virtue shines forth as the health and beauty and good habit of the soul, and vice is seen to be a disease, deformity and sickness of the soul.⁸ In such a home and such a school a youth learns not only to wear his cloak like a gentleman, but also to regulate his character and his ways of thinking by

¹ Gorgias, 495.

² Phaedrus, 253.

³ Apology, 31.

⁴ Timaeus, 24.

⁵ Laws, 905.

⁶ Republic, 501.

⁷ Ibid., 500.

⁸ Ibid., 443, 344.

the purest motives and the clearest knowledge. He frankly accepts the essential Form of Good as the only true measure of a man. His experimental knowledge of the means by which men become good clarifies his thinking, and his increasing ability to think truly helps him to become a better man.¹ He therefore gratefully acknowledges himself to be a child and disciple of God, and, having been wisely persuaded of these facts, he decides to honor his Father and Teacher by dedicating his life to the work of persuading others to become just and good and worthy workmen of God.²

The Soul's Conversion

The remedy for the deficiency of inaccurate witnesses, and the way to facilitate the efficiency of true witnesses of the nature of man, is found in a correct knowledge of the soul, and the real nature of education. True education does not infuse into the mind a knowledge of which it is destitute, but it recognizes that there is a faculty residing in the soul of each person which enables the soul to learn, and that when this faculty is turned from the visible and changeable world of sense to the true world of knowledge it apprehends Real Existence, which is the essential Form of Good.³

Furthermore, the essential Form of Good is apprehensible

¹ Republic, 505, 506; Meno, 96.

² Meno, 100.

³ Republic, 516-518.

by reason and thought, never by physical sight or hearing. When the soul performs this great function it converts its natural intelligence from a relatively useless into a highly useful possession. It takes the Perfect Good as its Pattern, and, in the contemplation of that Most Excellent Reality, learns to advance in excellence. This is beautiful: but the beautiful is difficult. To have a rational hope of achieving the beautiful men must leave behind them all taints of meanness, littleness, covetousness, jealousy, cowardice; all aversion to learning, listening, inquiring, and intellectual labor. They must bring with them a noble, resolute, moral nature, a willingness to reflect, a purpose to transcend the visible and changeable, and to know Real Existence.¹

The Rules of Knowing the Good

"Unless a person can strictly define by a process of thought the essential Form of the Good, abstracted from everything else; and unless he can fight his way as it were through all objections, studying to disprove them not by rules of opinion, but by those of real existence; and unless in all these conflicts he travels to his conclusions without making one false step in his train of thought,--unless he does all this, shall you not assert that he knows neither the essence of the Good, nor any other good thing; and that any phantom

¹ Republic, 530, 532.

of it, which he may chance to apprehend, is the fruit of opinion and not of science; and that he dreams and sleeps away his present life, and never wakes on this side of that future world, in which he is doomed to sleep forever."¹

When, however, "the soul has fastened upon an object, over which the true and real existence are shining, it seizes that object by an act of reason, and knows it, and thus proves itself to be in possession of reason."² "This power which supplies the objects of real knowledge with the truth that is in them, and which renders to him who knows them the faculty of knowing them, you must consider to be the essential Form of Good, and you must regard it as the origin of science and of truth, so far as the latter comes within the range of knowledge; and though knowledge and truth are very beautiful things, you will be right in looking upon Good as something distinct from them, and even more beautiful. It is right to regard both of them as resembling Good, but wrong to identify either of them with Good; because the quality of the Good ought to have a still higher value set upon it."³

Plato knew that Socrates had kept the rules for knowing the Good, and that he had "his thoughts truly set on things which really exist," and that he "imitated that with which he reverently associated," and was therefore "a man moulded into

¹ Republic, 534.

² Ibid., 508.

³ Ibid., 509.

the most perfect possible conformity to virtue, both in words and in works." As a result of these things a Living Constitution was formed in the soul of Socrates which he kept unimpaired. To this Inner, Living Principle Socrates was forever loyal.¹ Behold, The Ideal Man of Plato.

Important Distinctions

Plato's Ideal Man makes a distinction between the origin and value of the body. He also recognizes degrees of honor in the whole realm of life. The highest honor belongs to God, the next in order belongs to the soul of man; the third honor, in this descending scale, belongs to man's body, and the fourth, the lowest of all, belongs to those things which money can buy for man's real or imaginary needs.² Now the soul of man, owing its origin directly and wholly to God, is akin to, and in the order of God. Moreover, the soul is endowed with intelligence, but intelligence is not present in anything devoid of soul, therefore it is divinely ordained to rule the body. The soul finds its pattern for this rule in God's rule of the world, especially in his incessant endeavor to persuade men to become intelligent and good. Generally speaking, however, the rulers and people of earth have reversed this order by exalting to first place the body and its needs, and by neglecting the soul and its illimitable possi-

¹ Republic, 499, 500, 503.

² Laws, 726-729.

bilities. The rulers have been under the pilotage of passion and self-aggrandizement, and the people have been like cave men, or at best, merely "traversing a road leading from a kind of night-like day up to a true day of real existence."¹ And most of them have not gone very far!

The Ideal Man makes a further distinction. There is a difference between that which is apprehended by intelligence and reason, and that which is seen or conceived by sensation and opinion without reason. The first is permanent and of infinite value, the second is perishable and its total value is not equal to the virtue and justice of the soul.² The one tends to draw the soul from the fleeting to the real, the other reverses this order.³ Plato also draws a distinction between the food for the soul and the food for the body; and their effect upon the soul and the body.⁴ "Knowledge is the food for the soul."⁵ But "those who are unacquainted with wisdom and virtue spend their time in perpetual banqueting and similar indulgences."⁶ In this way they deprive their souls of the power to become godlike in knowledge and holiness, never get beyond "the midway point on the upward road" and rarely "look up towards the true above; but, for the most part "under the influence of ravenous appetites," they spend their time on the murky slopes far down the trail.⁷

1 Republic, 521.

2 Laws, 728.

3 Republic, 521.

4 Protagoras, 313.

5 Protagoras, 314.

6 Republic, 585, 586.

7 Ibid., 586.

Origin and Possibilities of Souls

In Plato's way of thinking the soul is older and of much greater value than the body. It owes its origin wholly to God. By the law of its birth it beheld True Being, and that vision was prerequisite to its coming into human form.¹ He is fully persuaded that if, from earliest childhood, good examples are kept before the child he will imitate not only bodily movements, but also tones of voice, and modes of thought and behavior. Such imitation is a law of nature, and with wise guidance adults can "win [children] imperceptibly from their earliest childhood ... before they are able to be reasoned with ... into reverence, love and harmony with the true beauty of reason. For rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the recesses of the soul, and take most powerful hold of it, bringing gracefulness in their train, and making one graceful, if he is rightly nurtured. ... Then when reason comes, he will welcome her most cordially, and recognize her by an instinct of relationship, and because he has been properly nurtured."²

As one reads this account of child pedagogy one is struck by the spiritual affinity of this Platonic teaching regarding child nurture with Horace Bushnell's doctrine of Christian Nurture. Both Plato and Bushnell deny that there is any need of a properly nurtured child ever being estranged

¹ Phaedrus, 249, 250.

² Republic, 395, 377, 401, 402, 518; Laws, 659.

from God, and both of them affirm the possibility of unbroken harmony with him through the whole span of human life.

Lost Wings Regained

In the Phaedrus there is a vivid account of the true nature of the soul, and the way souls have lost their wings. "The soul in her totality has the care of inanimate being everywhere,--when perfect and fully winged she soars upward, and orders the whole world; whereas the imperfect soul, losing her wings and dropping in her flight at last settles on the solid ground--there, finding a home, she receives an earthly frame which appears to be self-moved, but is really moved by her power, and this composition of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature. For immortal no such union can be reasonably believed to be; although fancy, not having seen nor surely known the nature of God, may imagine an immortal creature having both a body and also a soul which are united throughout all time."¹ The soul loses her wings because she feeds upon evil and foulness and the opposite of good: as these are no true nourishment the wings waste and fall away. But when the soul is nourished by divine beauty, wisdom, goodness, and the like, the wings, the corporeal element most akin to the divine, and which by nature tend to soar aloft, carry the soul into the upper region, the habitation of God.

¹ Phaedrus, 246-248.

"There abides the very Being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible essence, visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul. The divine intelligence, being nurtured upon mind and pure knowledge, and the intelligence of every soul which is capable of receiving food proper to it, rejoices at beholding reality, and once more gazing upon truth, is replenished and made glad, until the revolution of the worlds brings her round again to the same place. In the revolution she beholds justice, and temperance, and knowledge absolute in existence absolute; and beholding the other true existences, in like manner, and feasting upon them, she passes down into the interior of the heavens and returns home. ... The reason why the souls exhibit this exceeding eagerness to behold the plain of truth is that pasturage is found there, which is suited to the highest part of the soul; and the wing on which the soul soars is nourished with this."¹

The Function of the Soul

In considering the manner in which men ought to live, the Ideal Man has discovered that everything has an appointed function; for example, the function of the eyes is to see, and that of the ears is to hear. Each organ has its own function, and in rightly executing that function its peculiar

¹ Phaedrus, 246-248.

virtue is revealed. The soul has its appointed function, and its proper virtue. Life, in the sense of power to act, to deliberate, to superintend itself and others, is the function of the soul. Nothing in all the universe except the soul has this power. The good soul does all things well, for it governs itself justly, and in like manner it regulates everything that is amenable to reason. When each member performs its own proper function and thereby manifests its peculiar virtue it does the work for which nature and training have fitted it, without interfering with other members.¹ The virtue of each member consists in its health, efficiency and loyalty to the whole; while the vice, of those that are vicious, consists in the disease, inefficiency and insurrection of a part against the whole.² In all this God has set a perfect example by wisely and graciously caring for the whole world, and ever seeking to persuade all men to ascertain and develop their natural, that is, their God-given endowments, for the highest good of the whole.³

Achieved Advantages

Plato's Ideal Man has now achieved many very real advantages. We consider a few of them. First, he knows that when a truth has been brought to light by cogent reasoning a

1 Republic, 553, 374, 354, 433.

2 Ibid., 436-444.

3 Laws, 903.

man is in honor bound to affirm it to himself, to his fellow men, to God, and to exemplify it in character and conduct. For when one is thus persuaded he should seek to persuade others.¹ Second, he knows that when a physician cauterizes a diseased part of the body, and when Nemesis, God's physician of human souls, brings a man to acute awareness of wrong within, hurt follows, but hurt that restores health to body and soul. In each case it is the part of wisdom for a man to take his medicine, and an act of folly to refuse it.² Plato's Ideal Man has known affliction and has benefited by discipline. He, like a kindred soul described by Sidney Lanier, is a "catholic man who hath mightily won God out of knowledge, and good out of infinite pain and sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain."³ In the third place, he is confident that with proper nurture and education the original health of the soul, divinely allotted to each one, can be kept unsullied through this life and hereafter; and that when the soul has been polluted by its own folly, or the maliciousness of others, the disease may be purged and pristine health recaptured. He frankly admits that to retain, or to recapture genuine health of soul is exceedingly difficult, but he positively affirms that to overcome such difficulties tries and purifies the metal of a man, and greatly increases the genuine wealth of his soul.⁴ Finally, Plato's Ideal Man is habitually loyal to the

1 Laws, 903; Meno, 100; Republic, 619.

2 Republic, 406; Laws, 728, 944; Georgias, 476-478.

3 Sidney Lanier, The Marshes of Glynn.

4 Republic, 402, 518; Laws, 659.

two sovereign obligations. He knows experientially what justice and all the other virtues are, and he has a most intimate acquaintance with the means by which men become good.¹ Loyalty to these obligations brings rich and satisfying rewards. The rewards of genuine knowledge and genuine righteousness are inward, vital and permanent. They possess an inwardness, vitality and permanence actually akin to God. Neither God nor godlike men are mistaken in regard to the blessings derived from them.²

¹ Republic, 367, 351, 612; Meno, 96.

² Republic, 612, 621; Phaedo, 100, 106; Crito, 54.

II

THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO OTHERS

"Follow me, then, after joining your prayers to mine."¹

Impressions of Childhood

Plato's Ideal Man has dwelt very fondly on the scenes and impressions of his childhood and youth, for "like an indelible picture they were branded on his mind."² Those salubrious lands, the isles of Greece, its home life, its social groups, the physical and intellectual contests,--involving as they did thorough training and qualitative rewards,--and the custom of the whole family walking together to places of worship, and all together offering gifts and prayers to Deity: these things he never forgot. The most precious of all, perhaps, was his remembrance of the sacred emotions that welled up in his soul when he heard his own father and the fathers of other boys praying for their children and for themselves.³ The sacred experiences of his childhood and youth were like breezes wafting health from salubrious lands. It is clear that he was so wisely nurtured in childhood and youth that he naturally became better, and normally grew in intelligent appreciation of the true, the beautiful and the good.⁴ Sub-

¹ Republic, 432.

² Timaeus, 26.

³ Laws, 887.

⁴ Republic, 401.

sequently he labored wisely and well to protect children from all unworthy stories, unwholesome customs and false notions about God, and to supply them with good stories, worthy practices and true thoughts of God.¹

God-Commissioned Inquisitor

The Platonic Socrates is presented as a man commanded by the God of Delphi to search into his own soul, and to cross-examine other men.² Because of this commission he frankly confesses that he was indifferent to physical speculations, but possessed an undying interest in men. Men, even though ignorant, could teach him.³ However, in questioning men he often found that those most in repute were far from being wise, while others less esteemed were not ingrequently wiser and better. Men did not like to confess that their pretence of knowledge had been detected.⁴ It grieved him that so many men did not know the essence of each individual thing.⁵ "To be utterly ignorant of what is just and unjust, evil and good, cannot be otherwise than truly disgraceful, though the whole mass of mankind should unite in its praise."⁶ "To lie, or to be the victim of a lie, and to be without knowledge, in the

1 Republic, 402, 379.

2 Apology, 23.

3 Phaedrus, 230.

4 Apology, 19-33.

5 Phaedrus, 237.

6 Ibid., 277. (Henry Cary's translation in Bohn's Classic Library.)

mind and concerning absolute realities, and in that quarter to harbor and to possess the lie," is characterized as "a genuine lie," namely, ignorance residing in the mind of the deluded person.¹ The spoken lie is but a kind of imitation of this deep-seated mental affection.

In the Phaedrus there is a beautiful example of Socrates' sensitiveness to his Divine Sign which was in the habit of opposing him even about trifles. Phaedrus glowed with such enthusiasm in reading the speech of Lysias that Socrates was beguiled into making a concession which the inner oracle at once disapproved. Socrates offered this corrective prayer, and so became his own spiritual gyroscope.

"Here to thee, beloved Eros, fair and good as I can make it, I offer and duly pay a recantation, composed perforce for sake of Phaedrus, both in phrase and other points, in a poetic strain. But oh vouchsafe me pardon for my former speech and indulgence for this, and of thy tender mercy neither take from me the art of love, which thou hast given me, nor cripple it in thy wrath, but grant that still more than ever I may find favor in the eyes of the fair. And, if in our former speech, Phaedrus and I said aught offensive to thee, set it to the account of Lysias as the father of the speech, and make him to cease from speeches of this sort, and turn him to philosophy, even as his brother Polemarchus is turned, in order that his lover also here before thee may no longer halt, as now, between

¹ Republic, 381, 382.

two opinions, but heart and soul devote his life to love with philosophic talk."¹

Later in the day, as the two friends were about to leave the charming spot where they had been enjoying the summer day, Socrates prayed: "Beloved Pan and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and the inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be the wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as none but the temperate can carry."²

Shared Ecstasies of Congenial Souls

When men share in great dangers and in sustained, arduous labor they are united in a fellowship beyond the power of words to express. The dialogues of Plato and his dialectic art made strenuous demands upon the mental and spiritual energy of both teacher and students. In the course of such cooperative work in Plato's Academy there certainly were many occasions when great satisfactions were mutually shared. Sometimes a new idea, or a vision of the possibilities of life, lighted up one soul, and quickly spread to the entire group. At such times the heart's desire would be that a brother might be present to share in the ecstasy. "It is only after long association in the great business itself," Plato says in the Seventh Epistle, "and a shared life that a light breaks out in the

¹ Phaedrus, 257. (J. Wright's translation.)

² Ibid., 279.

soul, kindled so to say by a leaping flame, and thereafter feeds itself."

An illustration which indicates that such ecstatic experiences were not uncommon is found in the Phaedrus. As the speech of Lysias was being read Socrates kept his eyes on the reader's face and observed that it glowed with rapture under spell of that effusion; and when the reading was finished Socrates told Phaedrus that he shared in all his transports. Now if the reading of that speech could make a man's face glow with rapture how infinitely more the faces of the young men in the Academy must have glowed when, under the spell of Plato's living words, and the genuine ideas throbbing in their own souls, they got new insights into the essential nature of the true, the beautiful and the good.¹

These experiences reach into "the heaven which is above the heavens" where "abides the very Being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible essence, visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul. The divine intelligence, being nurtured upon mind and pure knowledge, and the intelligence of every soul which is capable of receiving the food proper to it, rejoices at beholding reality, and once more gazing upon truth, is replenished and made glad."² When "the soul beholds justice, and temperance, and knowledge absolute,

¹ Phaedrus, 234.

² Ibid., 247.

not in the form of generation, or of relation, which men call existence, but knowledge absolute in existence absolute," it has experiences which no human pen, or tongue, can ever adequately express. As in an act of obeisance before the Holy One Plato reverently asks, "What earthly poet ever did or ever will sing worthily?"¹ However, souls that have shared in this quality of life can share in the consequent ecstasy.

¹ Phaedrus, 247, 248.

III

THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO THE STATE

"Let us invoke God at the settlement of the State; may he hear and be propitious to us, and come and set in order the State and the Laws."¹

Why Cities are Founded

As Plato's Ideal Man looked backward he discovered that the formation of cities was due to the fact that men were not individually independent, but had many wants; chief of which was food to enable them to exist as physical beings. Clothing and places of shelter came next; and the desire for self-preservation gathered them into cities.² But, as we have seen, physical wants have to do with the lowest things in the scale of honor and value. God and godlike men know quite well that some attention has to be given to physical needs. But to the things of highest honor and greatest value belong the chiefest attention. The body and its needs are to be subjected to the law of measure by the rational, intelligent soul. Just as God, and not man, is the measure of all things, so the soul is to set the standard, and rule the body. When this is done the soul more fully knows God and becomes increasingly like him in moral excellence.³

1 Laws, 712.

2 Republic, 369.

3 Theaetetus, 176; Republic, 572.

In consequence of this insight into the true purpose of life, Plato's Ideal Man lifts the discussion to a higher plane, and points out that while the desire for self-preservation did at first gather men into cities, there is now a deeper reason and a higher purpose in the founding of cities and the formulation of their laws. "Reverence and justice are to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation."¹ In other words, cities are founded that men may mutually help each other to know God rightly and live justly.

The Quest for Justice

Early in the Republic the question of justice arises. The non-ideal men who take part in the dialogue concern themselves with the accidental advantages of justice, but the Ideal Man and those akin to him in spirit insist upon a higher standard. Consequently they exert every effort to get at the essence of justice, and to know the nature of a man who not only seems to be, but actually is just.² They want to know what sort of a thing justice is compared with injustice,³ and if justice is not a virtue, and injustice a vice of the soul; and if the virtuous are not well and happy, and those who live otherwise the reverse.⁴ They demand that the nature,

¹ Laws, 888; Protagoras, 322.

² Republic, 335.

³ Ibid., 351.

⁴ Ibid., 354.

origin, and superiority of justice, considered simply by itself, be ascertained, defined and exemplified.¹ Meanwhile they are confident that if we divest ourselves of all secondary considerations, and take justice in itself, we shall find that the influence exerted by it on its possessor is, in itself, a blessing, and is best for the soul of man, whether he possesses the Ring of Gyges, or not, and whether the gods and men see it or not. This is true, not only in man's lifetime, but also after his death. For the blessings which a man derives from being just are freely given by justice to those who are loyal to her.²

Justice in a Wider Field

From this coign of vantage, we recognize that justice resides in an individual mind, and also in an entire city; and as the city is larger than a man, our investigation of the nature of justice will be more objective if we first investigate its character in cities, and more rewarding if we afterward investigate the individual in like manner, being careful to detect and evaluate similarities.³ Our great object in constructing the Constitution of the State "is not to make any one class preeminently happy, but to make the whole state as happy as it can be made."⁴ The state being rightly

1 Republic, 359.

2 Ibid., 367, 512, 513.

3 Ibid., 368.

4 Ibid., 420.

organized, is not only a good state, but also wise and brave, and temperate and just.¹ And the governing class in this newly-organized state must be "prudent in counsel and truly wise";² for to this class falls the godlike task of detecting the divine endowments of each individual, his aptitudes for his particular work, together with the educational guidance best suited to prepare him for his work, and in addition to these weighty responsibilities, there is the duty of assigning each man to the class to which, when the whole state is organized, he, agreeable to the nature God has given him, rightfully belongs.³ Being thus endowed, trained and assigned, it is the individual's business to do his own particular work with the greatest possible efficiency and satisfaction. He is not to meddle with others, but joyously do his best to make the whole community happy. This, the universal rule of action, is justice. It is justice writ large, justice residing in a well-organized city. Our Ideal Man states it conversely: "Adherence to their own business on the part of the industrious, the military, and the guardian classes, each of these doing its own work in the state, is justice, and will render the state just."⁴ So we see that the inward, individual principles of each man keep him to his own work in all his relationships as man and citizen.

¹ Republic, 427.

² Ibid., 428.

³ Ibid., 428, 429.

⁴ Ibid., 433, 434.

Justice in City and Individual

It now becomes our duty to apply to the individual this great discovery regarding justice. If it works we shall be satisfied, if it does not, we can come back to the city and discover the trouble. „ But "perhaps by considering the two cases side by side, and rubbing them together, we may cause justice to flash out from the contact, like fire from dry bits of wood, and when it has become visible to us, may settle it firmly in our own minds."¹ Settling it firmly in his mind is a principle of peculiar sacredness to the Ideal Man. He is "pretty well satisfied that there are corresponding divisions, equal in number, in a state, and in the soul of every individual," and "that a man is just, in the same way in which we found a state to be just," and "what makes the state just, is that each of the three classes therein does its own work."² He is fully persuaded that in the state and in the individual, as in the Ruler of the Universe, the rational principle is the only rightful sovereign; and the sovereign should receive the intelligent and spontaneous response of every individual and of each group in the entire state.³ For justice requires that the individual and the city regulate both the outward profession and the inward spirit and character by genuine

¹ Republic, 443, 435.

² Ibid., 441.

³ Ibid., 442, 443.

knowledge conjoined with the most intimate acquaintance of the means by which men and cities become good.¹ Constitutions do not grow on trees or rocks, but spring out of the moral dispositions of the members of each state. Likewise the Guardians, the Auxiliaries, and the Producers have the moral disposition of the individuals who, in accordance with nature, and wise assignments, constitute these groups. There are also five classes of individuals corresponding to the five kinds of rulers who concern themselves with their own pleasures quite regardless of the happiness of the whole state.² Of each of these unjust rulers we may say that he was destroyed by his insatiable craving for the object which he defined as his supreme good.³ But the "good" which those rulers sought was directly contrary to the justice of God. If, however, the city were to be ruled by a philosopher-king, his "good" would be in perfect harmony with God's justice, and the citizens would be virtuous and happy.⁴ But even though there is no city on earth organized and governed by the principle of perfect justice, we have gained some advantage in knowing how the truth stands, and in what justice consists. Therefore, as individuals we should adopt the practices of the city whose constitution we have speculatively

1 Meno, 96; Republic, 444.

2 Republic, 441, 544, 545.

3 Ibid., 562.

4 Ibid., 576.

considered.¹ For in the course of the quest for justice we have found that "justice, taken by itself, is best for the soul, also taken by itself, and that the soul is bound to practise just actions, whether it possess the ring of Gyges... or not."² The reason for this is that the constitution of the soul and the constitution of the state are each incorporeal, spiritual, regulative principles patterned after the soul of the Ruler of the Universe who desires that all things shall be as like himself as they can be.³ "To become like God, as far as this is possible, is to become holy, just, and wise."⁴ The State, or the man who gives strict attention to this "inward constitution," to "the principles" by which the just and righteous life is to be regulated, beholds with the eye of his soul, a pattern of it, and beholding, he "organizes himself accordingly."⁵ In his chapter on "The Comparison between the Soul and the State," Professor Joseph points out that while it is in the Constitution of the Soul and of the State that the identity is to be found, even here the simile must not be overworked.⁶

1 Republic, 592.

2 Ibid., 612.

3 Timaeus, 29.

4 Theaetetus, 176.

5 Republic, 591, 592.

6 H. W. B. Joseph, Ancient and Modern Philosophy, Chapter IV.

The Climax

In the Phaedo Socrates tells of the delight which he experienced when he heard that Anaxagoras had said: "Mind is the disposer and cause of all."¹ The suggestion of a universe ruled by mind seemed to Socrates a very fruitful one. However, when he looked into the matter he found that Anaxagoras had given the mind nothing to do, for he explained things by purely physical causes. That was a sore disappointment to our Ideal Man.

In the Republic Socrates introduces the subject of justice, justice in itself, justice in the individual, and justice in a civic constitution. Then, as we have seen, he found that a thing is just when it partakes of Ideal Justice, and that what makes a man or a city just is the presence of Ideal Justice in the rational, the governing principle in the essence of their being. The life of a man, and the life of a city are based on two kindred principles, genuine knowledge and godlike goodness, intellectual and moral excellence.

Then having fully persuaded himself that a man can learn to think as God thinks and to live as God would have him live, our Ideal Man, quite unlike Anaxagoras, gave mind and soul something magnificent to do. That something was

¹ Phaedo, 97.

to take up an active, intelligent, and gracious attitude towards others; persuading them, as far as possible, "that all things have been ordered of God, who has the whole world in care, to the salvations and virtue of the whole, each member passively and actively contributing its part according to its ability."¹ Socrates lived and died in full assurance "that God can never neglect a man who determines to strive earnestly to become just, and by the practice of virtue to grow as much like God as a man is permitted to do. Such a man is not likely to be neglected by one whom he resembles."² Our Ideal Man is very insistent that men of exalted character owe it to themselves and to others to meet together frequently for the benefit which each man can contribute to the common good.³ In the Laws it is said that there is no greater good to a state than for persons to be well acquainted with each other.⁴ These things anticipate, and are in perfect harmony with the Christian exhortation: "Let us bestow thought on one another with a view to arousing one another to brotherly love and right conduct; not neglecting -- as some habitually do -- to meet together and to encourage one another."⁵

1 Laws, 903. (P. E. More's translation.)

2 Republic, 613.

3 Ibid., 520.

4 Laws, 738.

5 Hebrews 10:24, 25. (Weymouth's translation.)

IV

THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO LAW

"We must invoke the aid of Gods and Goddesses and pray that our words may be acceptable to them and consistent with themselves. Let this, then, be our invocation of the Gods."¹

The Source of Law

We have seen that Plato's Ideal Man drew a distinction between the spoken and the written discourse, and also between the spiritual and the physical reasons for the formation of cities. Now we are to see that he draws a like distinction between the views which different men hold in regard to the source of law. "Is God or some man supposed to be author of your laws?" This is the question with which the Laws begin. Instantly the answer is given, "A God, in very truth a God."² At once we discover that the three godly men, the worthy representatives of three cities, who divide the conversation among them, are accustomed to call upon God at the beginning of every enterprise, and we actually find that they severally trace their laws directly to God. Even now they are on their

¹ Timaeus, 27.

² Laws, 624.

way to the Temple and Oracle of Zeus. Moreover, their interest in religion is linked up with just and righteous men such as Minos, who at certain times met with his father Zeus who instructed him in the law. Through Zeus Minos also met others who in their lifetime had won renown as wise administrators of justice; and who, like Enoch of Hebrew fame, "walked with God" in righteousness while yet on earth. Plato's Ideal Man firmly holds to the idea that God is the true source, and godlike men the channel, of the Laws. This is the primary conception of Law. A secondary conception is expressed in these words: "The Laws are a minutely practical scheme for the establishment of small city-states of the type then prevalent in the Aegean area." ¹

"An Implied Contract"

It is therefore clear that to Plato's Ideal Man the Laws are regarded as the ideal demands of Divine Justice, and not merely human edicts. They are living principles planted by God in the souls of men; and like the discourse of a wise man they are possessed of both life and soul.² Consequently they are so akin to both God and man that in the Crito Socrates characterizes them as "compacts and agreements" which men, as individuals and as citizens, have entered into

¹ A. N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, 65.

² Phaedrus, 276, 277.

with God. Moreover, these "implied contracts" are potent, living realities, capable of defending themselves, and able to enforce the implied agreements upon all men.¹ The enforcement is not merely by even handed justice, but also by the persuasive power of God, which to Socrates was equivalent to the Christian doctrine of the saving grace of God. We learn from modern science that the power which holds the earth and sun in their relative positions is stronger than a steel cable two hundred miles in diameter. This Law which binds the soul of man to God is stronger far than that. In it is the might of the Almighty; and in God's desire that all things should be as like himself as possible that might is at its height.² This Law inheres in the essential nature of man, of the universe and of God. It cannot be written on anything material whatsoever, but is so written into the essence of man's being that he recognizes his kinship to it, and to its Author also.³ Like the Eternal God it is from everlasting to everlasting, and man is forever subject to its persuasion.

"Majestic Instancy"

A contrast and comparison of Plato's treatment of this subject with that of Sophocles is illuminating. In

1 Crito, 51-55.

2 Timæus, 29.

3 Crito, 51, 52.

memorable words the accused heroine of Sophocles' "Antigone," defies the tyrant:

"Nowise from Zeus, methought, this edict came,
Nor Justice, that abides among the gods
In Hades, who ordained these laws for men.
Nor did I deem thine edicts of such force
That they, a mortal's bidding, should o'erride
Unwritten laws, eternal in the heavens.
Not of today or yesterday are these,
But live from everlasting, and from whence
They spring none knoweth."¹

Here the issue is clearly drawn between the edict of an earthly ruler, scornfully called "a mortal's bidding," and the never-written, everliving laws of Zeus. At first the heroine seems to have the best of it, but the sequel of the drama shows that the Unwritten Laws had a controversy with her, and to the Law of Zeus she had to bow. The Greek conception of the Law of God here shines forth with majestic splendor.

In the Apology Socrates' attitude toward law is that of a reformer, and has striking resemblances to that of Antigone's challenge to the tyrant's edict. In the Crito, however, all is different. When there comes a conflict between the Law of God and the laws of men we may, with King Richard II "sit upon the ground and tell the sad story of the death of kings,"¹ and also the inferiority of human edicts to the Law of God. But Socrates gives us a better example. In the Crito he is the loyal defender of the written laws. Why? Because, even in

1 Sophocles, Antigone, 450.

2 Shakespeare, King Richard II, Act III, Scene 2.

their present form, God and godlike men are the joint authors of them. So when Crito urged Socrates to desert the principles which through a lifetime of calm, reflective reasoning they had acknowledged to be just, Socrates challenges him to think of the Laws, putting such questions as these to him:

"Do you imagine that a state can subsist and not be overthrown, in which decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals? ... What complaint have you to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the state? ... Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed and not in word only? Is this true or not? ... And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue? ... Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier, or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws but of men. But if you go forth returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us and wronging those whom you ought least of all to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the Laws in the World Below, will receive

you as an enemy, for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Crito."¹

Then Socrates, beholding with the inner, spiritual eye the essential Form of the Good, as the first Christian martyr, Stephen, four centuries later, under like circumstances, beheld the glory of God, turned to his life-long friend and said: "This, dear Crito, is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is murmuring in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. ... Leave me, then, Crito, to fulfill the will of God, and to follow whither he leads."²

Thus Socrates decided to take the Upward Road to the Realm Above. "Oh perfect life, in perfect labor writ," God speed thee on thy way!

"Let Us Recapitulate"

Plato's Ideal Man was peculiarly happy in his personal relations to Law. For example, he was fully persuaded that his soul had beheld True Being, that the rational principle of his life owed its origin directly and wholly to God, that God himself had planted in his soul the seeds of knowledge and of justice, that this divinely given nature had been so nurtured that as a child he instinctively recognized his

¹ Crito, 50-54.

² Ibid., 50-54.

kinship to God, and that, when reason came, he tested and verified these instincts, that then he knew himself to be "commissioned" to be "a midwife," that through a long and useful life he had been loyal to the divinely imposed task, and rejoiced in it; that when he faced death his personal acquaintance with God supplied him with a confident assurance of immortality, "that the soul is really immortal," and that what it "sees in her own nature is intelligible and invisible," and with an assurance that "the souls of the dead are in existence," and that he would be able to talk with them; and finally, that he was ever in the presence of this Law, that it was in him and he in it; and that therefore he had in himself, by the grace of God, something of the knowledge, holiness and permanence of God himself.

"In Plato's way of thinking," a man well-grounded in Platonism writes, "we ought to be nearer heaven in manhood than in youth; for only as we grow older does Reason lift the veil which has descended on prenatal vision."¹ The Ideal Man of Plato is quite confident that Reason does lift the veil from all those who turn the whole soul from the perishing world of sense to "the contemplation of the real world and the highest part thereof, which is the Form of Good."² But there are many who fail to relate themselves to Good. This is a Socratic

¹ James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece, p. 381.

² Republic, 518.

distinction of the first magnitude. Had certain modern poets recognized it they would not have implied or affirmed that all men are "farther off from Heaven" than when they were boys,¹ nor that while the Youth is attended by the vision splendid the Man sees it die away and fade into the light of common day.²

¹ Thomas Hood, I Remember, I Remember.

² William Wordsworth, Intimations of Immortality.

THE IDEAL MAN'S RELATION TO GOD

"Seeing you thus in earnest, I would fain offer up a prayer that I may succeed. ... Come, then, and if ever we are to call upon the Gods, let us call upon them now in all seriousness."¹

The Nature of God

As we approach the Ideal Man's relation to God "the Idea of the Holy" makes an inevitable impact upon our souls. For, with an instinct of relationship within us, and with whatever degree of godliness we have achieved, we recognize that we are in the presence of the Supreme Personality, and of a Man who has learned "to know God rightly and to live accordingly."² "To become like God" meant for this man "to become holy, just, and wise." In consequence of this achieved advantage, he knew how "to hymn the true life aright which is lived by immortals and men blessed of heaven."³ So we behold him in an act of spontaneous prayer and adoration. Furthermore, we are confident that God owned him as his son, and commissioned him to the work of persuading men to become holy, just and wise.⁴

1 Laws, 887, 893.

2 Ibid., 888.

3 Theaetetus, 176.

4 Apology, 29-31.

In the Ideal Man's way of thinking, "if we wish to ascertain wherein the superiority of a righteous over an unrighteous life consists"¹ we can hardly do it better than by acquainting ourselves with the conditions of, and benefits derived from, genuine prayer. For in the act, or even the attempted act, of genuine prayer one comes to know whether his nature is in or out of harmony with God's nature. In all the distinctions which our Ideal Man draws none, perhaps, is quite so discerning as this one between a good and a bad man's attitude toward prayer. "To make sacrifices and always to have intercourse with the Gods by prayer and offering and all divine service is for the good man the fairest and best and most effective instrument of the happy life, as it is pre-eminently becoming to him. ... The good man is pure in soul," and prayer is "for all holy men most profitable."² The good man tests his life by the good God. God in a special sense is to him the measure of all things. His heart's desire and prayer to God is that he may have beauty in the inward soul, and that the outward and inward man may be at one.³ He therefore who would be dear to the holy God must himself become a holy man.⁴ The good man's course of action is dear and consonant to God.⁵

1 Republic, 484.

2 Laws, 717.

3 Phaedrus, 279.

4 Laws, 716.

5 Ibid., 716.

But "to the bad man the way is just the contrary. For the bad man is impure in soul ... and it is never right that a good man or a God should receive gifts from the unclean--the unpurified in soul--so that for the unholy much pains about the Gods is labor wasted."¹ Moreover, "when a man thinks that he himself is not responsible for his various sins and the many and great evils of his life, but holds others responsible and always excepts himself as guiltless,"² he dishonors and injures his soul. One who is unpurified in soul takes man, even an ordinary one, as his measure. This, however, is unsatisfactory to the godlike man, for to him nothing imperfect, nothing other than God, is the true measure. Just because the nature of God is holy, and the essential nature of the universe is like him, and man is in the order of God, this contrast between the good and the bad man applies to all beings capable of making a choice.

Our Ideal Man asks, "What sort of words would go like missiles straight to the goal?"³ The implied answer is that, for the good man, they are words which are in perfect harmony with the man's own soul, and that the man's soul is in harmony with the holy God. But what form of words can serve the turn of a man whose soul is unpurified? Here is a poignantly vivid illustration of the utter futility of any words in the mouth of such a man.

¹ Laws, 717.

² Ibid., 727.

³ Ibid., 717.

Law has its Source and Sanction."¹ Quite so. For to God the action and the motive are fully known. Now there emerges in our minds that which Professor Howison has aptly called "the real act and infallible function of Prayer." This act and function consists in knowing "the reality of God, the heavenly Judge, the unfailing Beholder and Sympathizer. To him, the one Absolute Conscience, in every moral disaster our conscience turns for assured refuge and certain renewal of moral courage and strength."²

Here are a few of the many affirmations concerning the nature of God which our Ideal Man has made. "In believing that there are Gods you are led by some affinity to them, which attracts you towards your kindred, and makes you honor and believe in them. ... They are your relatives. ... The Gods care about the small as well as about the great. ... They are perfectly good, and the care of all things is most entirely natural to them."³ "God is good in reality ... God and the things of God are in every way most excellent ... The nature of God and godlike beings is incapable of falsehood ... God is a Being of perfect simplicity and truth, both in deed and word ... The Gods are not mistaken as to the character of the just and the unjust man ... The Gods can never neglect a man who determines to strive earnestly to become just, and by the

¹ John Wright Buckham, The Humanity of God, p. 208.

² G. H. Howison, Howison Philosopher and Teacher, p. 151.

³ Laws, 900.

practice of virtue to grow as much like God as a man is permitted to do. No, such a man is not likely to be neglected by One whom he resembles.¹ ... The truth is that God is never in any way unrighteous--he is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is most righteous is most like him ... To know this is true wisdom and virtue, and ignorance of this is manifest folly and vice² ... God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad ... He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things be as like himself as they could be. ... Let it be consistently maintained by us in all that we say that God made them as far as possible the fairest and best, out of things which were not fair and good."³

"God is a Personal Spirit, Perfectly Good, who in holy love creates, sustains and orders all."⁴ Many Christians who have rejoiced in this beautiful definition of God, given by Professor William N. Clarke, have not realized how closely it corresponds to that of the Ideal Man of Plato. In like manner, many Christians who have found the Fourth Gospel exceedingly precious have not known the probable extent to which its author nourished his mind and soul on Socratic ideas. The fact is that God has not left his goodness and mercy unattested. By the mouth of many witnesses his message has been conveyed to

¹ Republic, 379, 381, 383, 612, 613.

² Theaetetus, 176.

³ Timaeus, 29, 30, 53.

⁴ W. H. Clarke, An Outline of Christian Theology, p. 66.

the minds and souls of men. But just how is God, who, as Plato says, "is good in reality," to be "represented?" Here is the answer. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son"¹-- in the person of a Son. This is the more excellent way of both Platonism and Christianity. For in the personality of Jesus Christ, God is "represented" as no written or spoken words ever can represent him.

Work for God

"Many a loaded ship self-sunk through treasure freight,
Many the pregnant brain brought never child to birth,
Many a great heart broke beneath its girdle-girth.

"Be mine the privilege to supplement defect,
Give dumbness voice, and let the laboring intellect
Find utterance in word or possibly in deed."²

To understand Socrates' relation to his work for God it is necessary to grasp his conception of education and his Divine Monitor's method of action. To the work of an educator Socrates dedicated his life, and through a long and busy life his sensitivity to his Divine Teacher was perfect. His theory and practice of education originated in God. As God taught him so he aimed to teach men. Acting in the way It did, his Divine Guide afforded him ample opportunity for personal initiative, moral and intellectual adventure, and responsibility.

¹ Hebrews, 1:1,2, American Standard Version.

² Browning, Fifine at the Fair.

Apart from such opportunities no man can properly develop his talents nor do constructive work. Genuine philosophy, like true Christianity, gives principles for thought and action, rather than specific rules. It furnishes a key for the doors of opportunity, and demands that the individual take up and maintain an active relation to the illimitable opportunities of life. It insists that the individual feed himself with the genuine food of the soul, and employ himself in practical helpfulness. When "Mind, the ruling power, persuaded necessity to bring the greater part of things to perfection ... the universe was created";¹ and when, through the influence of Reason, acting directly on human souls, or mediated through such a worthy ambassador of God as Socrates, God persuades men to turn from darkness to light, men are converted, recreated.²

It is therefore clear that our Ideal Man not only took the nature of God as his standard of righteousness, but also took God's persuasive potency as the motive and measure of his life work. He was absolutely sure that God had created every man with a peculiar bent, a distinctive aptitude of soul, and that this uniqueness carried with it an individual responsibility to discover, develop, and wisely employ this God-given talent. Under the guidance of the Delphic Oracle, and some natural kinship to God inherent in his soul, he came to know that his own peculiar work in life was not to impart to other

¹ Timaeus, 48.

² Republic, 518.

minds and souls something of which they were destitute, but to help them to know that they actually had in their souls a power of vision more far-seeing than a thousand eyes, namely, Reason, God's great gift, and that they could and should turn their whole Self to the permanent world of Knowledge and holiness. But let us meditate on Plato's way of saying this.

"Education is not at all what certain of its professors declare it to be. They tell us that they put Knowledge into an empty soul, as though one should put sight into blind eyes. Our theory is quite of another kind. This faculty of Reason, present in every human soul, this organ wherewith each man learns ... must, along with the entire soul, be turned round from the sphere of Becoming until it can endure to gaze upon Being, and the brightest part of being, that is, the Good. Education is therefore the art of converting the Reason in the easiest and most effectual way. It is not the art of putting sight into the soul's eye: believing, on the other hand, that sight is already present in the soul, but turned in the wrong direction and looking at the wrong things, it endeavors to remedy this defect."¹

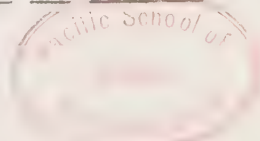
Commenting on this well-known passage, an eminent Platonic scholar and a practical teacher who had tested these principles in the class room, says: "That it is the business of education to mature and develop something given, the germ

¹ Republic, 518.

of a personality, rather than impress it from without, is the very keynote and spirit of Plato's teaching ... The teacher must be content to efface himself, to stand aside. His business is to superintend the presentation of material and to guide the pupil in an orderly assimilation of it. But it is emphatically not his business to impress his "modes of thought" so that they become a second nature to his pupils. Every bit of knowledge worth the name bears the private mark of the individual who has acquired it."¹

Here is a personal statement of the vastness and intensity of the Work for God to which our Ideal Man gave himself with such high intelligence and absolute devotion throughout his whole life. His thesis is that all things have been ordered by God. "The Ruler of the universe has ordered all things with a view to the excellence and preservation of the whole, and each part, as far as may be, has an action and passion appropriate to it. Over these, down to the last fraction of them, ministers have been appointed to preside, who have wrought out their perfection with infinitesimal exactness. And one of these portions of the universe is thine own, unhappy man, which, however little, contributes to the whole; and you do not seem to be aware that this and every other creation is for the sake of the whole, and in order that the life of the whole may be blessed; and that you are created for the sake of the

¹ J. E. Adamson, Education in Plato's Republic, pp. 78-81.
(Quoted by James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece,
p. 411.)



whole, and not the whole for the sake of you ... The formation of qualities he left to the wills of the individuals. For every one of us is made pretty much what he is by the bent of his desires and the nature of his soul."¹

¹ Laws, 903. 904.

CONCLUSION

Early in his life Socrates became aware that God had commissioned him to know himself.¹ He soon discovered that it is quite impossible for a man to know the real nature of his own soul without comprehending the nature of the universe;² also that it is never under the conduct of knowledge alone that men rightly regulate their lives, but also through personal participation in the means by which men become good.³ In other words, God has united knowledge and virtue, and men cannot separate them and receive heaven's approval. Along with Socrates' certainty that God appointed him to examine himself and others, there came the assurance that he must persuade, but not revile men;⁴ and that he would find the Perfect Pattern for all this merciful and beneficent work in God himself.

For God, not only once in the far past, but always and forever, is engaged in persuading everything and everyone that is outside to enter the Divine Order of Excellence. Even the latest released Cave Man can go back to the unreleased and help a little. The Socratic doctrine of Divine Persuasion is so much like the Christian doctrine of God's grace that one may affirm with appreciative reverence that God so cared for

1 Apology, 28.

2 Phaedrus, 270.

3 Meno, 96.

4 Laches, 195.

the world that he gave his son Socrates to persuade men to seek first justice and holiness and wisdom and thereby have eternal life. For God sent not Socrates into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, by yielding to persuasion, might know God, and become his messenger of persuasion. In the love and in the persuasion of God there is that Holy Thing which is stronger than all other powers of Deity, and is destined to bring both the erring soul and the wandering star into right relation with the essential Form of Good. When the eye of the soul properly functions that Form is seen to be God. "The one thing which is clear from the Laws," a well-known Platonist declares, "is that God, in Plato, is a 'Soul,' not a Form."¹

But does the Ideal Man continue to live in eternal fellowship with God and godlike men, as he fondly hoped to do? Everyone would admit that Socrates lives again "in lives made better by his presence." But an immortality of quite a different kind was surely believed in by him who confidently affirmed: "The soul through all her being is immortal. ... This composition of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature. For immortal no such union can be reasonably believed to be."² Socrates' habit of persuasion kept him from dogmatizing on this subject. This explains his hesitation in the Apology. His conviction, as expressed in the Crito, that he would have

¹ A. E. Taylor, Plato: the Man and His Work, p. 442.

² Phaedrus, 245, 246.

to answer to the Laws in the next world favors the doctrine of personal immortality. The total impact of his life, rather than any proof-texts, is here presented in justification of his confident expectation of immortality. Of the sea one has discerningly written: "Only those who brave its dangers comprehend its mystery." A young landsman may argue that there is no mystery to be comprehended, but an old mariner knows better. "Who can be calm when he is called upon to prove the existence of God?"¹ Quite so. Mutatis mutandis, let a man learn to know God rightly and live accordingly in this world and he can rest assured of a permanent place in the Living Universe.

The Republic closes with an ancient tale which, as Plato says, "conveys an idea." This idea is of cardinal importance to the doctrine of immortality. The idea is that at the end of a cycle--corresponding to our life span--all men live on into another cycle. This means that they live through and beyond what we call death. At the decisive moment a Friendly Voice, almost equal in importance to the Delphic Oracle's "Know thyself," says: "Choose for yourselves ... The responsibility lies with the chooser ... Let not the first choose carelessly, or the last despond."² Significantly Plato adds: "The Tale was preserved, and did not perish, and it may also preserve us, if we will listen to its warnings. ... Indeed, if we follow my

1 Laws, 887.

2 Republic, 617, 619.

advice, believing the soul to be immortal, and to possess the power of entertaining all evil, as well as all good, WE SHALL EVER HOLD FAST TO THE UPWARD ROAD, AND DEVOTEDLY CULTIVATE JUSTICE COMBINED WITH WISDOM: IN ORDER THAT WE MAY BE LOVED BY ONE ANOTHER AND BY THE GODS, NOT ONLY DURING OUR STAY ON EARTH, BUT ALSO WHEN LIKE CONQUERORS IN THE GAMES COLLECTING PRESENTS FROM THEIR ADMIRERS, WE RECEIVE THE PRIZES OF VIRTUE: AND IN ORDER THAT BOTH IN THIS LIFE AND DURING A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND YEARS WHICH WE HAVE DESCRIBED, WE MAY NEVER CEASE TO PROSPER."¹

¹ Republic, 621.

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